



#### FULL MEMBERS

Bethany Christian Services  
D.A. Blodgett Services for  
Children & Families  
Catholic Charities of Shiawassee  
& Genesee Counties  
Catholic Social Services—  
Grand Rapids  
Catholic Social Services  
of Lansing/St. Vincent Home  
Catholic Social Services  
of Oakland County  
Child & Family Service  
of Saginaw County  
Child & Family Services, Capital  
Area  
Child & Family Services  
of Northeast Michigan  
Child & Family Services  
of Northwestern Michigan  
Children's Home of Detroit  
Christ Child House  
Florence Crittenton Services  
Eagle Village  
Family & Children's Service of  
Midland  
Family Counseling & Children's  
Service of Lenawee County  
Family Outreach Center  
Federation of Youth Services  
Forever Families  
Girlstown Foundation  
Good Will Farm  
Homes for Black Children  
Icon of Youth & Family Services  
Judson Center  
LDS Family Services  
Lula Belle Stewart Center  
Lutheran Child & Family  
Service of Michigan  
Lutheran Social Services of  
Michigan  
Lutheran Social Services of  
Wisconsin & Upper Michigan  
The Manor  
Promise Village: Home for  
Children  
St. John's Home  
St. Vincent & Sarah Fisher  
Center  
Spaulding for Children  
Starr Commonwealth  
Teaching Family Homes  
of Upper Michigan  
Wedgwood Christian Services  
Whaley Children's Center

#### AFFILIATE MEMBERS

CMH & Substance Abuse  
Network of West Michigan  
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids  
Michigan Network for Youth &  
Families  
Michigan State University School  
of Social Work  
National Association of Social  
Workers—Michigan Chapter  
Upper Peninsula Children's  
Coalition

309 N. Washington Square, Suite 011 • Lansing MI 48933  
Phone (517) 485-8552 • Fax (517) 485-6680  
Elizabeth A. Carey, Executive Director

#### Metro Detroit office

18010 Muirland • Detroit MI 48221  
Phone (313) 340-0608 • Fax (313) 340-0614  
Verlie M. Ruffin, Associate Director

#### Web site

www.michfed.org

#### Email

lansing@michfed.org  
elizabeth@michfed.org  
verlie@michfed.org  
rose@michfed.org

**To: Representative John Stahl, Chair  
and Members of the House Committee  
on Family and Children Services**

Representative Tom Pearce (Maj. VC)  
Representative Barb Vander Veen  
Representative Jack Hoogendyk  
Representative Fulton Sheen  
Representative Brenda Clack (Min. VC)  
Representative Dudley Spade  
Representative Gino Polidori  
Representative LaMar Lemmons, Jr.

**From: Verlie Ruffin, Associate Director  
Michigan Federation for Children and Families**

**Date: June 8, 2005**

**Subject: Testimony on DHS Family-to-Family Service Model**

Good afternoon, Representative Stahl and committee members. I am Verlie Ruffin, Associate Director of the Michigan Federation for Children and Families, a membership organization comprised of private, nonprofit agencies, advocacy groups and individuals serving children and families in the state of Michigan.

Thank you for devoting your Committee agenda to hear comments from private agencies regarding the DHS Family-to-Family service model. Private agencies provide over 65% of the abuse and neglect foster care service in Michigan.

I have been involved since 2002 with the Family-to-Family Initiative in Wayne County as co-chair of the F2F Recruitment, Retention and Training Strategy Committee, and I most recently co-chaired the statewide DHS Public-Private Provider Partnership F2F Workgroup. The results of this work group are the focus of my testimony today.

This work group was comprised of public/private providers from large, small, urban and rural communities. The charge was **not to change the basic tenants of the F2F model**, but to receive input from providers regarding the implementation and on going practice of this new way of doing business in the child welfare system.

We began our work in May of 2004, presented a final report to DHS Director Udow on December 3, 2004 and were informed that the report was accepted in April 2005. As you know, the F2F rollout is expected to be completed and fully operational in every county statewide by 2007.

**Testimony on DHS Family-to-Family Service Model**

Memo • June 8, 2005 • Page 2

---

Due to the complexity of the F2F model and the significant changes required for both public and private providers, the workgroup developed a report that included over 60 recommendations related to the four core F2F strategies:

1. Recruitment training and supporting resource families
2. Building community partnerships
3. Making decisions as a team
4. Evaluating results

I have attached to the cover memo, the shortened version of the initial report, which includes six general recommendations or guiding principles and specific recommendations under each core strategy that are considered to have highest priority. The full report can be provided upon request.

Due to time constraints, I would like to very briefly **highlight the six general recommendations/guiding principles found on pages 1-2 of the report.** A couple of Federation member agencies providing testimony today will address in detail several of the system barriers they have experienced in the implementing the model.

In closing, while there are many challenges to overcome, the work group was generally supportive of the philosophy and basic tenants of the Family-to-Family model. However, **we urge that this House Committee and DHS administration give careful consideration to the recommendations identified in the report to assure needed resources are available and that the successful implementation occurs consistently statewide.**

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information with you.

VR:rh  
Attachment

# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

## TEAM:

Public Private Provider Family to Family (F2F) Workgroup

## CHARGE:

Provide input from the public and private providers regarding the implementation and ongoing practices of the F2F Child Welfare Services Model.

The co-chairs of this workgroup experienced the following difficulties with this assignment: At each bi-weekly meeting, additional, new participants attended, and the new attendees were not knowledgeable about the F2F model, but routinely they did not hesitate to express objections to the model. The workgroup felt limited in the scope of this assignment due to the absence of a detailed, statewide implementation plan. In addition, there was an absence of clarity regarding what, if any, elements in the F2F Model are “negotiable” and/or “adaptable” based upon individual county needs and characteristics. In short, the workgroup believes they could have been more effective and productive if there had been an existing, approved “blueprint” for the implementation of the F2F model in Michigan.

## OUTCOMES & MEASURES:

1. Reduce the number and rate of children placed away from their birth families
2. For children placed in foster care, increase the number/rate of children placed in care in their own neighborhoods or communities
3. Reduce the number of children served in institutional and group care settings
4. Decrease the lengths of stay of children in placement
5. Increase the number and rate of children reunified with their birth families
6. Reduce the number of replacements for children
7. Increase the number of siblings who are placed together
8. Reduce the overrepresentation of children of color in placement

**NOTE: Measurements for all of the above need to be established by FIA.** Baseline data must be established and shared with local offices, private agency partners, courts, and community partners. Measurements for all outcomes must be easily accessible from FIA information systems and retrieval and application of data must be consistent throughout the state.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The workgroup will present general recommendations followed by specific recommendations for each of the F2F four core strategies. The general recommendations are considered to be guiding principles. The workgroup concluded that rationales, barriers, and solutions were not applicable to the general recommendations.

### General Recommendations

#### **General Recommendation #1**

FIA must assume lead responsibility for F2F implementation and identify an FIA statewide F2F coordinator.

# **PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **General Recommendation #2**

FIA must establish a statewide, detailed implementation plan that sets expectations, roles of all partners, timelines, policies, objectives, and operational definitions, but allows local discretion and flexibility in meeting the objectives.

## **General Recommendation #3**

FIA must determine staffing resources (public & private) required for implementation and ongoing practices within the F2F model (e.g. F2F Coordinators for each implementation area, facilitators, establish caseload/workload sizes, etc.)

## **General Recommendation #4**

FIA must establish and coordinate orientation and training for child welfare specialists and stakeholders

## **General Recommendation #5**

All decision making will consider and value the best interest of the child and voice of the family.

## **General Recommendation #6**

The PPP F2F Workgroup identified over sixty (60) recommendations related to the four core strategies. The workgroup concluded that the implementation plan must include working committees dedicated to identifying recommendations for each of the F2F core strategies.

## **Recommendations for the Core Strategies**

Note: Due to the number (over sixty) of recommendations identified, this report will present the recommendations considered to have the highest priority.

## **Core Strategy: Recruitment, Training, & Supporting Resource Families**

### **Recommendation #1--Recruitment**

FIA in conjunction with private agencies shall develop a statewide plan that incorporates marketing strategies for recruiting resource families who are located where children live.

**Rationale:** A collaborative recruitment plan will save worker time and effort by giving recruitment staff the ability to share and have access to new marketing strategies that can increase the number and quality of resource families.

**Barrier:** Recruitment efforts require significant resources; providers will be unable to meet the needs of all families in all areas.

**Solution:** A coordinated recruitment plan will be cost effective, produce consistency and quality.

### **Recommendation #2 – Recruitment**

A collection of “How to/Best Recruiting Practice” resource materials from F2F implementation areas shall be available to FIA and private agencies throughout the state.

# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

**Rational:** Feedback from implementation area recruitment experiences/activities in all categories (recruitment, retention, training) will help determine necessary modifications in staffing resources and in the licensing process.

**Barrier:** Best-practice information not been gathered/consolidated

**Solution:** Assign a resource analyst to the Statewide implementation team.

## **Recommendation #3 – Recruitment**

Initiate a media campaign that promotes a positive image of foster care and foster families; include the use of foster families trained in F2F principles to assist.

**Rationale:** A negative image of the foster care system is one reason for the scarcity of resource families.

**Barrier:** Funding

**Solution:** Pursue enhanced funding and support from public and private sources.

## **Recommendation #4 – Recruitment**

Provide adequate compensation to private agencies to conduct targeted recruitment necessary to be compatible with the F2F Model. In addition, recruitment funding must be allocated at the county level to allow for jointly developed recruitment plans.

**Rationale:** Targeted recruitment will be required to meet the unique needs of all families in all areas. Dollars allocated at the local level can be tailored to meet the specific needs of communities.

**Barrier:** Current contracts do not provide compensation to providers for the recruitment demands of the F2F model.

**Solution:** Contract rates and reimbursements must be linked to the F2F model and resource requirements.

## **Recommendation #5 – Recruitment**

FIA must develop an information system that captures accurate, real-time data on all licensed families. The system must be accessible to all providers for both data inquiry and input. Data must also be available for determining resource needs (PS activity, foster home vacancies, placement criteria, etc) in all communities.

**Rationale:** A management info system is integral to the successful implementation of the F2F model. Providers must have access to real time data on child welfare needs before determining the allocation of recruitment efforts and resources—i.e. must know the number of children placed and the communities where they live.

**Barrier:** Currently, an information system does not exist.

**Solution:** FIA must acquire an information system that will provide the data to support the F2F model.

## **Recommendation #6 – Recruitment**

Relevant licensing requirements that impede recruitment efforts must be changed, the licensing variance process needs more flexibility, an expedited and liberal licensing process for relative and fictive kin is needed, and adequate compensation must be established for all resource families.

# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

**Rationale:** Current licensing rules and regulations pose barriers to licensing of both relative and non-relative resource families (e.g. square footage, basement bedrooms). Inadequate compensation to resource families impact both recruitment and retention rates.

**Barriers:** OCAL rules and regulations and Act 116 govern requirements that need to be reconsidered. Compensation is controlled by Contracts and Rate Setting (and limited by budget concerns.)

**Solutions:** Workgroups need to be established to assess potential changes with OCAL rules, any legislation, federal funding waivers, and changes to the compensation rates for resource families.

## NEXT STEPS:

Recommendation	Action Steps	Time Frame	Resources	Lead
1. Statewide Recruitment Plan	Workgroup needs to be formed	ASAP	Reps from Private Providers, FIA Program Office	Statewide F2F Coordinator
2. How to/Best Practice Resources	Resource Analyst to be identified	Begin ASAP but ongoing task	An analyst dedicated to this responsibility	Identified analyst
3. Media campaign	Communications to work with Foster Care Program reps regarding recruitment needs	Begin ASAP but ongoing task	FC Program office reps Communications reps	Communications Director and FC Program Office
4 Compensation/Funding	Contracts to be re-written for Private Child Placing agencies	Linked to F2F implementation & contract renewal schedules	Contracts and rate setting must work with Budget Office and private providers	Statewide F2F Coord., dir. of contracts, and rep. for FIA director
5. Develop Information System	Assessment of system needs and recommend a system	ASAP	F2F consultants, coordinators, DIT, etc.	Statewide F2F Coord. & DIT
6. Licensing changes	a. Establish workgroup	ASAP	OCAL staff, legislative liaison, field reps.	F2F Coord. & OCAL Dir.

## Core Strategy: Building Community Partners

### Recommendation #1 – BCP

FIA assumes lead responsibility but must work with private child placing providers to map out a BCP strategy. This will require a statewide coordinator and local coordinators and steering committees.

**Rationale:** Private child placing agencies have full service responsibility for a significant percentage of the children active with child welfare.

**Barrier:** none

**Solution:** Identify an FIA statewide BCP coordinator

# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Recommendation #2 – BCP**

Local FIA in each implementation area must determine the unique (best) approach for collaborating with community partners and private providers.

**Rationale:** Rural vs. urban, small vs. large implementation areas will have different dynamics and needs.

**Barrier:** none

**Solution:** Each implementation area must identify a BCP coordinator who will consult with the statewide BCP coordinator.

## **Recommendation #3 – BCP**

At the local level, there must be an identification – such as through the HSCBs – of the community partners and their roles.

**Rationale:** The role and level of involvement and interaction with FIA and the private providers will likely be different for each implementation area.

**Barrier:** none

**Solution:** Each implementation area must have a BCP coordinator, and any necessary support staffing, to work with the community partners.

## **Recommendation #4 – BCP**

Community partners and all stakeholders in child welfare need to be informed re: F2f model and then recruited and trained (training to be done by FIA).

**Rationale:** Accurate information must be communicated. FIA must be the source.

**Barrier:** Considerable training resources must be supported (funding and time).

**Solution:** Develop a training strategy and identify a training coordinator and support staffing

## **Recommendation #5 – BCP**

Establish a formal assessment process for community resource needs, feedback from community partners, and identification of policy/procedural barriers for communities.

**Rationale:** True partnership will require ongoing, formal interactions by FIA, private agencies, and community partners.

**Barrier:** Lack of data regarding community needs, lack of trust among partners, and inadequate personnel resources

**Solution:** Technical assistance from Casey and establishing local BCP implementation teams to begin forming working relationships. Tools for assessing community needs (accurate data) need to be acquired/developed.

## **Recommendation #6 – BCP**

Community partners and private child placing providers need better access to FIA information systems and data, and may have a role in providing direct data input.

**Rationale:** Partners need data and information timely.

**Solution:** FIA must acquire/develop an information system to support the needs of F2F.

# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

## NEXT STEPS:

Recommendation	Action Steps	Time Frame	Resources	Lead
1. FIA to map out a BCP Strategy	Develop a statewide BCP Strategy to be adapted by local offices	ASAP	FIA Statewide Coord., Casey Consultants, experienced local reps.	Statewide F2F Coord. and BCP Coord.
2. Local Implementation Plans	As each implements F2F, there must be a BCP implementation plan.	Linked to local implementation of F2F	Establish local office BCP lead, work with Private providers and community partners	Statewide and local BCP Coordinators
3. Identification of community partners and their roles	At F2F local implementation, FIA must work with established community groups to identify reps for F2F	Linked to local implementation	Local office BCP coordinator	Local office BCP coordinator
4. Training & sharing of info with community partners	Include training component in local Implementation Plan	Linked to local implementation	Casey Technical assistance, funding for training	Statewide and Local BCP coordinators
5. Formal process to assess needs and receive feedback	Develop at F2F local implementation	Linked to local implementation	Local office BCP coordinator	Local BCP Coordinator
6. Access to FIA info systems	Will require decision by FIA Director	ASAP	Assessment needed by Program Office, Legal Affairs, DIT	TBD by Director

## Core Strategy: Team Decision Making

### **Recommendation #1 – TDM**

Allow local implementation sites to determine staffing plan for TDMs –process to include private providers servicing the site.

**Rationale:** TDM needs for each site will vary and must consider the role of private child placing agencies serving the community.

**Barrier:** Local plans may request additional staffing resources and/or compensation to providers.

**Solution:** Develop a cost analysis to demonstrate that additional resources may need to be allocated at implementation as a means to achieve F2F outcomes and long-term savings.

### **Recommendation #2 -- TDM**

Increase the number of facilitators to accommodate full implementation of TDMs and assure necessary administrative support is provided.

**Rationale:** Success of F2F is dependent upon the TDM core strategy and will require adequate resources.

**Barrier:** Same as Recommendation #1

**Solution:** Same as Recommendation #1



# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendation #3 –TDM

Develop recruitment/training plan that assures maintenance of sufficient number of facilitators and continuity of training experience.

**Rationale:** Achieving the goals and outcomes of F2F and TDM processes require a consistent set of training protocols and resource allocation throughout the state.

**Barrier:** Funding to support the training curriculum will be needed.

**Solution:** Same as Recommendation #1. In addition Casey may continue to be a resource.

## Recommendation #4 –TDM

Develop a TDM database that allows FIA and private agency facilitators an efficient and effective process for data entry.

**Rationale:** Data collection and analysis is a primary component for the evaluation strategy.

**Barrier:** Financial and staffing resources may need to be dedicated to the development of the program and information system to meet this need.

**Solution:** Consult with Casey, DIT, and other info-system resources regarding development/acquisition of the best system.

## NEXT STEPS:

Recommendation	Action Steps	Time Frame	Resources	Lead
1. Local implementation staffing plans	Staffing implementation plan and guidelines need to be developed by the Director, FOA, Program Office. Cost analysis required— Budget & Program Offices	To begin ASAP	Lansing and local office participation will be required.	TBD by the Director
2. Increase the number of Facilitators	Staffing formula needs to be developed, staffing resources need to be acquired and/or reallocated	To begin ASAP	Staffing standards, Budget, FOA, Casey consultants	Director's designees and statewide F2F Coordinator
3. Recruitment/Training Plan	Allocate funding to support training, share existing training curriculum with each site	To begin ASAP	Training funds may need to be allocated	Statewide and local F2F Coordinators
4. TDM Database	Develop (or enhance existing) Database	Ongoing	Casey consultants, DIT, & F2F sites with experience	Statewide F2F Coordinator

# PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

## Core Strategy: Evaluating Results

### **Recommendation #1 – Evaluation**

Appoint a F2F Statewide Coordinator for the Self-Evaluation Core Strategy. The coordinator should have the responsibility and authority to manage the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting out of data. The coordinator should have primary responsibility for resolving problems and eliminating barriers regarding this strategy.

**Rationale:** Focused data management is necessary for FIA to ensure that F2F is implemented and monitored statewide with consistency and a reliable method for assessing the outcomes.

**Barrier:** A position needs to be allocated and responsibilities established.

**Solution:** Establish the position, requirements, and expectations.

### **Recommendation #2 –Evaluation**

Develop one basic Self-Evaluation model for the state, including clear operational definitions of the terms used. Involve representatives from experienced F2F sites in the development of the model.

**Rationale:** Credibility of the statewide F2F data requires consistency with the data collection and definitions of the measured elements.

**Barrier:** Allocating resources to develop the model.

**Solution:** Utilize Casey consultants, FIA staffing resources, and DIT.

### **Recommendation #3 –TDM**

Recognizing the necessity for statewide consistency, local sites will need the flexibility to add data collection elements identified as beneficial to the achieving F2F outcomes

**Rationale:** Local sites will have different needs and resources. Without compromising the statewide data collection, local sites may benefit from tailoring the self-evaluation process to meet local needs.

**Barrier:** Resources to assist local sites with adding elements to the statewide self-evaluation process.

**Solution:** Statewide Self-Evaluation Coordinator to develop a process for the approval of local plans. Options to fund the local plans will need to be explored at the local and state level.

### **Recommendation #4 –TDM**

Local office FIA and private agency designees must be able to report data electronically. Training and technical assistance to be provided by FIA.

**Rationale:** The process for acquiring and reporting data must be speedy, efficient, and accurate to support this core strategy. Training and technical assistance by FIA will ensure uniformity.

**Barrier:** Resources will need to be allocated to develop and support these recommendations.

**Solution:** Casey consultants, experienced FIA representatives and other resources may be available at minimal cost.

## PUBLIC PRIVATE PROVIDER RECOMMENDATIONS

### NEXT STEPS:

Recommendation	Action Steps	Time Frame	Resources	Lead
1. Appoint a statewide Self-Evaluation Coordinator	Decision to be made by the Director	ASAP	A position will need to be allocated	FIA Director or designee
2. Develop a statewide Self-Evaluation Model	Development of the model	Current & ongoing	Casey consultants, DIT, and experienced FIA reps.	Coordinators (F2F and SE)
3.Allow for local flexibility	To be assessed after the statewide model is developed	TBD	Could require state and/or local support to add elements to SE model	Coordinators (F2F and SE)
4. Electronic submission of data	Development of the program and process	ASAP	Casey consultants, DIT, and experienced FIA reps.	Coordinators (F2F and SE)